

Romaine Quinn

State Representative • Serving the 75th Assembly District

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Rep. Quinn Votes for Historic Reform Package

Madison – Representative Romaine Quinn (R-Rice Lake) voted to pass a package of bills that constituted the largest criminal justice reform in 30 years.

“The kinds of crime our communities face are changing. With methamphetamine-fueled crimes frequent in our district, it’s time to reform the criminal justice system to make sure we are helping those who have turned their lives around, but also making sure that hardened criminals are taken off our streets,” said Rep. Quinn.

Assembly Bill (AB) 953, known as “The Wisconsin Model,” is a bipartisan approach to transforming the juvenile justice system. It allows counties to place offenders in smaller, local facilities. This makes the system more responsive to local community needs while also giving young offenders more support. “When we keep juvenile offenders near home, they are able to rely on their community for support both during their incarceration and afterward,” said Rep. Quinn.

AB 93 allows former non-violent offenders to ask the courts to expunge their records, if they have served their sentence and have a clear track record of rehabilitation. “This helps people who have truly reformed re-enter society. We need everyone available to be working, and we believe in second chances,” said Rep. Quinn. “If someone has gotten back on track and is able to contribute to our communities again, he should have a chance to put a terrible mistake behind him. It’s still up to a judge to decide whether the person’s history should qualify for expungement.”

An amendment to Senate Bill 54 brings more assistant district attorneys (ADAs) to the 75th Assembly District. A total of 5.75 prosecutors will be funded in Barron, Brunett, Dunn, and Polk Counties. “It’s no secret that our prosecutors have huge caseloads. Every day our papers have stories of another meth bust. Having more ADAs will help ensure that we don’t cut plea deals because overworked prosecutors want to save time – they will have more resources to look at what is appropriate for each case,” said Rep. Quinn.

AB 906, part of the Assembly’s Heroin and Opiate Prevention and Education (HOPE) Agenda, increases funding for drug prosecutors, and gives judges another tool for sentencing drug offenders by hearing from a Victim Impact Panel to understand how the crime affected the community. “This bill helps us go after the major drug dealers who cause the real problems, while making sure that we’re dealing appropriately with real people who are struggling with addiction,” said Rep. Quinn. “Where a compassionate sentence will help a person get out of addiction, a judge may consider that. But when a hardened drug dealer is destroying a community, he should be sentenced appropriately.”

Three other bills (AB 88, 89, and 92) tighten sentencing restrictions for repeat offenders. The bills increase sentences for people who have committed especially dangerous crimes: homicides, kidnapping, carjacking, and child abuse, among other crimes. They also close a loophole on straw purchases to ensure that individuals on probation face the same penalty as those not on probation.

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